Information Link

A Source of Information for Our Customers

Happy New Year! Each year brings new challenges and new ways to make technology more effective in state government. And with each passing year, ITD continues to make great strides in technology for finding solutions to help government and the education community better serve North Dakota citizens. The January issue of the *Information Link* highlights some of ITD's upcoming projects.

ITD just completed the successful upgrade to the State Technology Access for Government and Education Network (STAGENet) in December 2006. The partnership and teamwork of everyone involved made this project a true success. This network provides powerful connectivity to state government, political sub-divisions, and the education systems. Customers using this network will enjoy even faster and secure connections as they perform their daily business.

Lisa Feldner, CIO

ITD continues to be a customer-centric organization striving to meet and exceed customer expectations. Our Service Desk is available to customers 24/7 to provide customers advice, guidance, and service restoration. Last year, the Service Desk logged some 40,000 incidents and earned a 99.8 percent favorable rating from customers who use the process. To enhance our customer service even more, ITD implemented a new system to report incidents online. You can read more about this service in the article *New Ways to Contact the Service Desk*.

To better serve our customers, ITD hopes to expand our desktop/device service support to other agencies to meet the demand of servicing the popular Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs).

ITD produced a publication titled *Providing Customer-Centric Services,* located at http://www.nd.gov/itd/software/doc/customer-centric-services.doc, to give a gen-

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eral overview of the value and services ITD provides to you, our customer. This document will accompany our Software Development Cost Estimates.

Collaboration tools are gaining in popularity everywhere because they make "doing business" more convenient and effective in the decision-making process. Last year, a committee was formed under the direction of Enterprise Architecture to research collaboration tools, and one such tool reviewed was SharePoint. ITD is proud to announce it plans to establish an enterprise model of Microsoft SharePoint 2007, which will allow state employees to collaborate internally with state government and our business partners.

And finally, the IT State Plan, "Working Together…Moving Forward," was recently released to the State Legislature and can be found on our website at http://www.nd.gov/itd/pubs/. This publication includes information technology plans from state agencies and the education community. ITD worked together with state government, the North Dakota University System (NDUS), the North Dakota Educational Technology Council (NDETC), and respective stakeholders to develop the many goals and strategies you will read in this plan. Working together helps us develop solutions that meet our common requirements to achieve our missions.

Technology is just a fact of life today. We use it, we need it, and we can no longer live without it. Technology is in our schools, our homes and the workplace. We need to be connected – whether it is via email, phones, or computers. It is how we do business today. And ITD is here to be your IT partner, helping you find the best solutions to bring together technology and people.

Desktop/Device Support Service
Mike Ressler, ITD Director of Operations

Years ago, Information Technology Department (ITD) provided desktop support service for agencies interested in acquiring technical support. However, the rapid growth of computer servers over the last ten years has forced the ITD desktop support technicians to become more focused on system administration of the servers.

As a result, agencies have been forced to acquire desktop support services from their own internal staff or from outside consultants. The number of requests from small to midsize agencies requesting ITD to begin providing this service has increased much over the past couple of years.

With the growth in procurement of Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's) and the need for technical support of these devices, ITD is requesting three positions from the Legislature to begin offering a desktop/device support service to interested agencies. ITD's Computer System's Division will be responsible for delivering this service and will be working with agencies to define the service levels over the next six months.

STAGEnet 2006 Project Completion
Glen Rutherford, Telecommunications

The Information Technology Department's (ITD) Telecommunications Division just completed the backbone upgrade for North Dakota STAGEnet (State Technology Access for Government and Education Network). The backbone upgrade resulted from the STAGEnet 2006 Transport RFP awarded to Dakota Carrier Network (DCN) in early 2006.

STAGEnet provides network connectivity for state government, political subdivisions, North Dakota universities, and K-12 schools. STAGEnet began in 2000, when it added the educational community (universities and K-12), which were using at that time a newly deployed ATM infrastructure provided by DCN. The STAGEnet 2006 backbone upgrade replaces all ATM services used within the wide area network "core" to Gigabit Ethernet. The network edge, mainly sites connected with a T1 (1.544Mb), remain connected using ATM.

As a result of this upgrade, STAGEnet customers benefit from an increase in core bandwidth capacity, functionality, and improved security. STAGEnet 2006 now operates from four backbone nodes as opposed to only two. In addition to the Bismarck and Fargo nodes, there are now nodes in Minot and Grand Forks. This provides STAGEnet with a four node protected Gigabit ring across North Dakota with a life expectancy of up to seven years. Each backbone node (network quadrant) has its own customer gateway, DNS, firewall protection, and content filter for K-12. This architecture divided the past design of one shared segment into four independent network quadrants. These changes significantly improve the data flow within STAGEnet and access to the Internet.

ITD thanks all our customers for their cooperation and patience throughout this project. You helped in many ways, which truly reflects the spirit of teamwork within STAGEnet. STAGEnet is a partnership of everyone connected to this network, and the success of this project's upgrade and STAGEnet belongs to everyone!

Computer Output to Microfiche
Judi Bakken, Records Management

Computer Output to Microfiche (COM) technology has been around for more than three decades. COM systems are too expensive to justify for most customers who produce small print volumes. Therefore, it is not difficult to conclude that these small customers are willing to pay someone else to produce COM for them, so the COM service bureau industry was born. One company remaining strong in this line of work is Anacomp Megacenters.

Anacomp Information Management Megacenters (IMM) process over 22 billion documents per year on an outsource basis for thousands of customers. Millions of pages of computer output are transmitted directly from customers through their turnkey Data Transmission Services (DTS) solution. The majority of this information is then processed, indexed, and printed to 16mm microfilm or 105mm microfiche.

The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB), Records Management Division, installed the Datagraphix XCOM processor and duplicator in 1984. At that time, approximately 102 agencies used this system to retrieve their reports daily, monthly, yearly, or quarterly.

Through the years and several department name changes, the COM equipment in the Information Technology Department (ITD) has become outdated and cost prohibitive to maintain. With the implementation of Electronic Document Management Systems (EDMS) technologies in the State of North Dakota, the production of COM has also declined.

Mainframe reports can now be processed through a product called Wappapello and stored in the FileNet document repository for viewing. If the reports have a long-term retention requirement, the images can be written to microfilm using the Kodak Digital Archive Writer. Some previous COM jobs have already been transferred to this EDMS process.

ITD made the decision to outsource the current COM jobs. We are using the Anacomp IMM for this process. All the programs for each agency were rewritten for the current mechanics, tested, and now it is time to let them move to production. The files are sent to Anacomp through a secure FTP process. The original and duplicate fiche are created and sent back to ITD for distribution.

The fiche physically looks a little different, but the information is the same. The major change is turnaround time, which will take two to three days.

If you have any questions regarding this outsourcing process, please contact ITD's Service Desk at (701) 328-4470.

ITD Earns EDMS Award
Bill Roach, Records Management

The Information Technology Department (ITD) recently earned FileNet's Platinum Award in recognition of successfully designing and deploying an Enterprise Content Management (ECM) solution using FileNet. The award was presented to ITD in November 2006, at the FileNet Americas UserNet Conference in Dallas, Texas.

ITD is becoming an emerging leader in ECM solutions with its deployment of FileNet. Organizations regularly contact ITD to gain insight on how to make ECMs viable enterprise solutions to easily and cost effectively store information.

Currently, state agencies store a variety of information and records in its FileNet-based system ranging from unemployment applications and vehicle registrations to tax filings and flex benefits records.

ITD joins a growing number of states in standardizing enterprise content management systems on FileNet. Ultimately, the implementation of standardized ECMs helps state government streamline operations and deliver better service to citizens.

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Microsoft SharePoint Service is Planned
Vern Welder, Software Development

Collaboration is a social trend sweeping the world. Today's youth make most of their decisions by collaborating with others using phone conversations, text messaging and instant messaging. Decisions made in a collaborative environment are generally considered better decisions because "two heads are better than one." Collaboration is the future employees' culture.

In order to attract future State employees and to make the current North Dakota State Workforce more productive, North Dakota Enterprise Architecture conducted a collaboration tool study. The study recommended Microsoft SharePoint as the next tool that state government should implement to enable collaboration.

The Information Technology Department (ITD) plans to establish an enterprise Microsoft SharePoint 2007 service that will enable state workers to collaborate internally within state government and with the State's business partners. The SharePoint service will be centrally managed by ITD as a billed service. ITD plans to start the service in April 2007.

ITD is currently planning the SharePoint service; defining its structure, determining infrastructure needs, working on billing rates, and learning more about SharePoint 2007 so the Department can help customers be productive quickly.

A more detailed announcement will be prepared after ITD finalizes the SharePoint Implementation Project Plan.

Agency Mainframe Migration Schedule

The Mainframe Migration Project is scheduled to complete in May 2008. To help ensure a smooth transition moving from the mainframe environment to the new Linux platform, ITD scheduled agencies to migrate their applications into four phases after carefully evaluating the complexity of applications and considering the daily operations of agencies. Once applications have been migrated to the new environment and thoroughly tested, agencies will "go live" following the phase completion dates.

Following is the agency phase migration schedule:

Phase I: January 3, 2006 – April 30, 2007
Office of the Attorney General
Bank of North Dakota
Office of Insurance Commissioner
Office of Management and Budget
North Dakota Department of Health
Information Technology Department, Part 1
Workforce Safety and Insurance

Phase II: July 31, 2006 – July 16, 2007
North Dakota Game and Fish
Office of the State Treasurer
NDPERS
Job Service North Dakota
Information Technology Department, Part 2
Department of Human Services – Stand Alone Applications

Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
1/3/06 – 4/30/07			
	7/31/06 – 7/16/07		
		1/8/07 – 11/09/07	
			5/7/07 – 5/7/08

January 06	July 06	January 07	July 07	January 08
Office of Attorney General	North Dakota Game and Fish	Department of Transportation	Department of Human Services
Bank of North Dakota	Office of the State Treasurer	Highway Patrol	Office of the Secretary of State
Office of Insurance Commissioner	NDPERS	State Radio	
Office of Management and Budget	Job Service North Dakota	North Dakota University System	
North Dakota Department of Health	ITD – Part 2	Department of Public Instruction	
ITD – Part 1	Department of Human Services – Stand Alone Applications		
Workforce Safety and Insurance			

Phase III: January 8, 2007 – November 9, 2007
Department of Transportation
Highway Patrol
State Radio
North Dakota University System
Department of Public Instruction

Phase V: May 7, 2007 – May 7, 2008
Department of Human Services
Office of the Secretary of State

The objective of this project is to migrate existing mainframe applications from the State's existing mainframe environment to a new computing environment. This project does not entail rewriting applications, but rather moving these applications to the new environment with little change, if any, in functionality.

For more information about the Mainframe Migration Project, please visit the project's website at http://www.nd.gov/itd/hosting/mfmigration/index.html.

ITD Service Description

Vern Welder, Software Development

As a service provider, the Information Technology Department (ITD) is often involved in discussions regarding the value of services that the Department provides. Most often, the conversation starts with billing rates and revolves around an explanation of what happens behind the scenes as ITD maintains and administers its services.

In order to help customers and potential customers understand the value of ITD's services, the Department developed a document titled *Providing Customer-Centric Services*, which explains the standard features built into ITD's services that add value. Customers can use this document as a guideline when comparing IT services from other vendors.

Providing Customer-Centric Services is available on ITD's website within the Software Development section at http://www.nd.gov/itd/software/doc/customer-centric-services.doc. ITD is including it with all Software Development Cost Estimates. It is an easy read, so please take a few minutes to review.

Providing Customer-Centric Services explains the multitude of services provided by ITD.

On The Job For ITD

Chad Gumeringer enjoys the challenge of working with complex computer systems and cutting edge technology while on the job at the Information Technology Department (ITD).

Employed by ITD for nine years, Chad not only works as a System Administrator in the Computer Systems Division, but he also serves as a team leader for UNIX/Linux hosted applications, primarily Websphere and Oracle.

Chad holds a degree in computer science from the University of North Dakota (UND). His hobbies include flying, electronics, music, hunting, and fishing.

New Ways to Contact the Service Desk
Gary J. Vetter, Customer Services

The Information Technology Department's (ITD) Service Desk is designed to be the "*Single Point of Contact*" for customer service and support. Two improvements were made to make it easier for customers to report problems, ask questions, request information, and offer feedback:

1) Incidents can now be reported online! A simple method to quickly log incidents is now on ITD's website (www.nd.gov/itd). Customers can describe issues in their own words and attach supporting material. Service is instantaneous (no busy signals) and important details are passed along verbatim to technicians (nothing is lost in translation). The online system also provides an alternative for logging incidents in the unlikely event of a telephone outage.

2) The toll-free number has been changed to (877) 328-4470. The last seven digits now match the local Bismarck number of (701) 328-4470, so it should be much easier to remember. The toll-free number is available within the United States and Canada, and both numbers connect customers to the Service Desk 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week.

ITD is focused on being customer-centric, and the Service Desk is where it all begins. Feel free to contact us anytime; we are here to help!

ITD'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

RESPECT
We treat everyone with dignity and respect.

TEAMWORK
We recognize ITD's success depends on partnerships and collaboration.

INTEGRITY
We build long-term, lasting relationships through mutual trust. We value open, honest, two-way communication.

LEADERSHIP
We encourage initiative and creativity. We are committed to investing in knowledge and expertise.

SERVICE
We hold ourselves accountable for a positive customer experience.